

A. Background

BLM Office: Arctic Field Office LLAKEF010

Lease/Serial/Case File No.: FF095699

Applicant: Dr. George J. Divoky
Friends of Cooper Island
652 32 Avenue East
Seattle, WA 98112

Dates of Proposed Activity: May 25, 2015 through September 10, 2015.

Proposed Action Title/Type: Field camp and Black Guillemot research

General Location of Proposed Action: Cooper Island

Description of Proposed Action: The applicant, George Divoky of Friends of Cooper Island, has requested authorization for field activity, access, and cabin occupancy at an established field camp on Cooper Island. Cooper Island is 25 miles east of Barrow, in the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A). Occupancy of the site would be from approximately May 25 to September 10, 2015. There will be one person full-time with a second person for approximately three weeks in June and for 3-4 weeks in August. Activities include biological research of Black Guillemots.

During the period of occupation of the field camp, seabirds breeding on the island are observed and monitored on a daily basis with information on population size, timing of breeding and breeding success obtained. The observations are conducted while walking around the island with no use of motorized vehicles. When not conducting ornithological observations or taking measurements, personnel will (typically one person) occupy the cabin. Power for the camp is supplied by solar panels and a small wind generator. Cooking is done on a propane stove. No gasoline engines are used on the island.

All access is from the village of Barrow, approximately 25 miles west of Cooper Island. Initial transportation to the island would be via snow-machine, over the sea ice in late May with the remote possibility of two to four helicopter trips (depending on the helicopter size) before breakup of the nearshore ice, which occurs between 1 July and 20 July. After breakup all transportation is by boat, with approximately 3-4 boat charters from Barrow to transport gear or personnel and to break camp at the end of the season.

The Department of Wildlife Management of the North Slope Borough provides logistical support during staging in Barrow and during the summer the applicant is in contact with Borough personnel daily by VHF radio or satellite phone. Dr. Divoky will obtain a permit from the Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation to travel over Corporation lands. Boat transportation to and from the island is done with Barrow residents.

Location of Proposed Action:

Most fieldwork would be conducted on the western end of Cooper Island where the U.S. Navy left abandoned boxes and wood in the 1950s that seabirds now use for breeding sites. Most of the human activity would occur within that area or adjacent to the camp. Location of camp is at 71° 14.1' N, 155° 43.0' W (Figure 1).

Legal Description: Sections 18, 19, 28, 29 and 30 of Township 22N, Range 14W of the Umiat meridian.

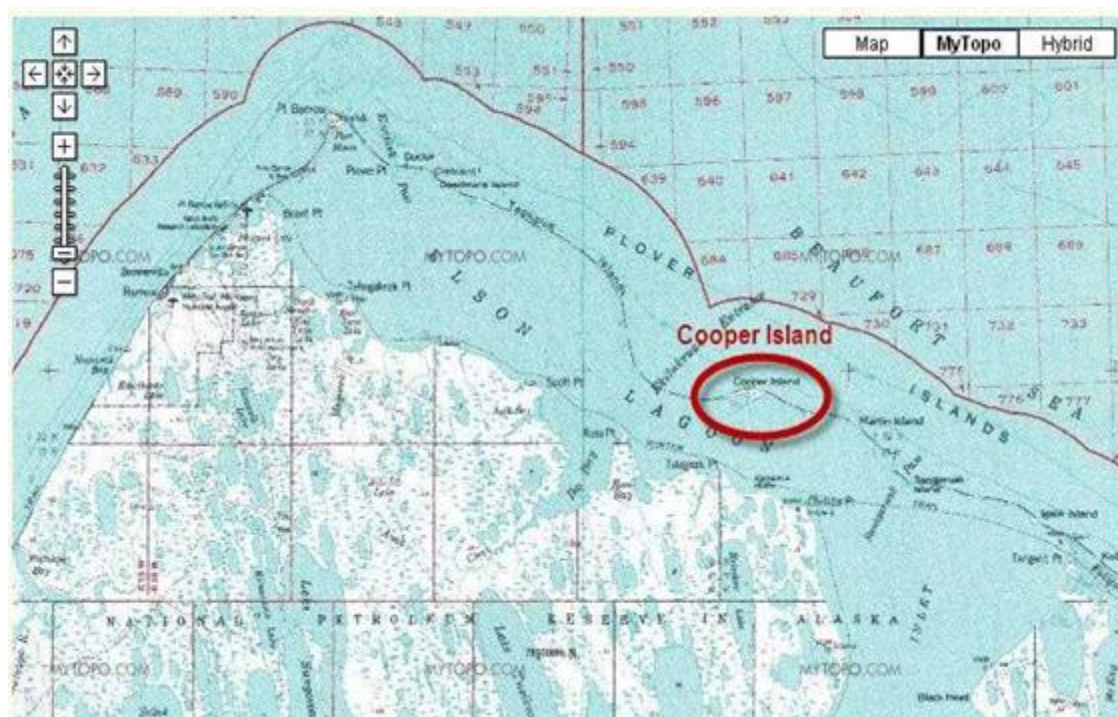


Figure 1. Map showing the location of Cooper Island east of Barrow:

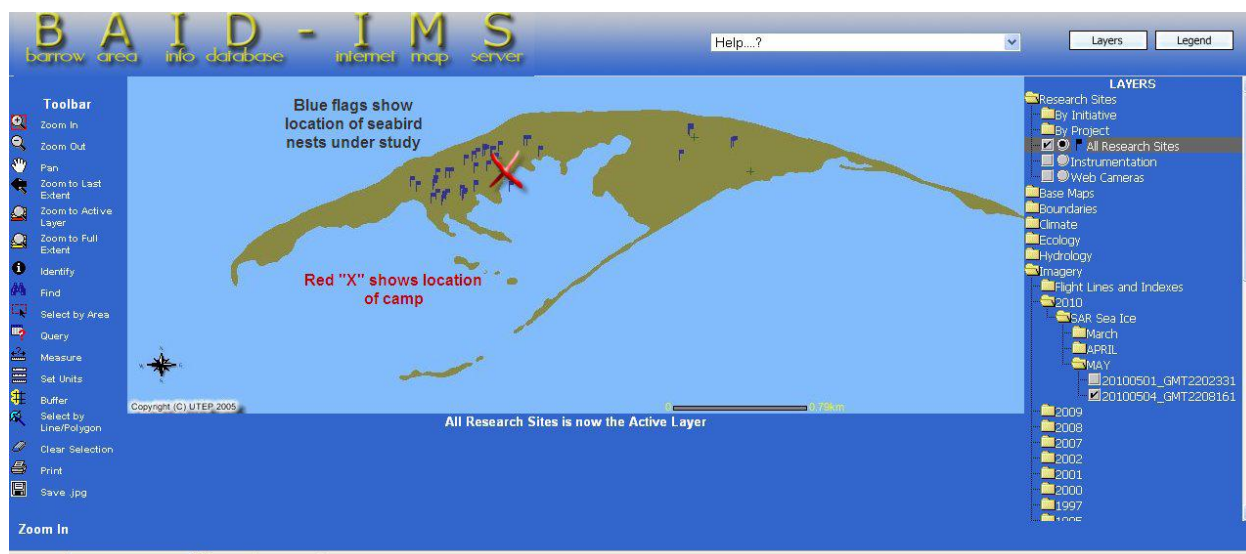


Figure 2: Map of Cooper Island showing location of guillemot nest sites and camp.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the following planning document: National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska Integrated Activity Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (IAP/EIS) dated November 2012 and associated Record of Decision dated February 2013.

The proposed action is also in conformance with the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act which allows for the authorization of uses consistent with the purposes of the Act.

C. Compliance with NEPA:

The IAP/EIS Record of Decision for the NPR-A developed stipulations and best management practices applicable to all activities in NPR-A. The stipulations and best management practices applicable to the proposed action will be provided, along with project-specific mitigation, to the applicant entitled: "FF095699 Friends of Cooper Island Summer 2015 Stipulations".

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, or 516 DM 11.9. Specifically the proposed action meets the criteria for a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9, BLM H-1790-1 National Environmental Policy Act Handbook Appendix 4(F-10) BLM Categorical Exclusions.

"Nondestructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial, and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research, and monitoring activities."

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

Extraordinary Circumstances	Yes	No
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
2.2 Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].		X
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
2.7 Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X

2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
2.11 Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).		X
2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).		X

D. Approval and Contact Information

I considered the proposed action and have determined that there is no potential for significant impacts.

/s/
 Stacie McIntosh
 Authorized Officer, Arctic Field Office

Date 5/27/2015

Contact Person:

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

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